

**Southampton
Local Offer Annual Report
2023 to 2024**

Introduction

The Children and Families Act 2014 requires that the Local Authority must publish an annual report on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). This annual report details feedback, about the Local Offer, from children, young people, and parent carers, what progress we have made, what we have learnt and our next steps.

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice states that Local Authorities must publish a 'local offer'. It also states that the purpose of the local offer is to:

- Include information on education, health, care, and other provision.
- Provide clear, comprehensive, accessible, and up-to-date information about the available provision and how to access it.
- Make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving disabled children and those with SEN and their parents, and disabled young people and those with SEN, and service providers in its development and review.

More information on what the local offer should include is in the [SEN \(local offer\) regulations 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice 2015- chapter 4](#)

To ensure we are meeting the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014 we must also ensure that we:

- Consult with all partners on the information to be held.
- Involve children, their parents and young people in the preparation and review of Local Offer
- Publish comments on the Local Offer
- Ensure that the information is accessible to everyone.

As with all aspects of our work in Southampton we co-produced the website with parents and young people and continue to work with them in developing and reviewing the Local Offer.

Our local offer is at <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/schools-learning/send-local-offer/>

Please note that Local Offer refers to all of the available provision and how to access it. The primary means of holding all of this information is Southampton City Councils Southampton Information Directory website.

Local Offer Annual Report on feedback 2023 - 2024

We are ‘co-producing’ the local offer with children, young people and families. *Co-production happens when all team member’s together co-produce recommendations, plans, actions and materials as a collective. This process develops over time, blends a range of expertise and perspectives, is driven by a solution focussed approach from all participants and requires strong leadership. Communication that is transparent and open, relationships that are equitable and respectful help the team overcome complex challenges and continue the process of learning together. (SE7 definition)*

This report shows how we worked with young people and parent carers in reviewing the local offer of services in Southampton, what users have said and what we’ve done in response to their comments. The Local Offer is primarily co-produced with Southampton Parent Carer Forum and their members.

Activity	What you said	What we did
<p>Direct feedback at parent carer engagement events.</p> <p>5 x SPCF Facebook Live sessions</p> <p>SPCF and Local Offer Survey</p> <p>SPCF Coffee Mornings</p> <p>Local Offer Website user experience testing sessions</p>	<p>Promotion and awareness of the Local Offer – not enough parents know about the local offer website or use it regularly to find information about services.</p> <p>Comments around why it is called the “The Local Offer” and what it means, can this be changed etc?</p> <p>“I know it is a centralised term, but I hate ‘local offer’ as a term - I think it should be ‘local SEN offer’ or something similar because it doesn’t mean anything to parents.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular SEND Local Offer Website Facebook page posts giving more information about what the local offer is and the information it provides. • Joint Survey with SPCF published about the Local Offer website and analysing the results. 192 families completed the question “Have you heard about the SEND Local Offer/website?” and 140 said they had, 72.9% which is a positive improvement on the last few years. More work needed around how meaningful this is and also if they understand what the role of the Local Offer is. • Regular presence of the SEND Local Offer Officer at local coffee mornings to offer support and information and to help parent/carers to navigate the Local Offer website (Springwell School, Kanes Hill Primary School and SPCF). • SEND Local Offer Officer to visit services/facilitate sessions on Teams to upskill

		<p>SCC staff/professionals on the SEND Local Offer website and how to use it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback was taken from the website user experience testing sessions and the SCC IT team have implemented any changes/improvements required. This was mainly around tweaking search results and how things look on the website. • A short video is now on the Local Offer Landing page giving brief information and an overview of what “The Local Offer” is. • “The Local Offer” is a nationally used term for the local provision of SEND services and we do not feel it is necessary to change the name. However, more awareness and promotion needed to make it more meaningful to families. • The first SEND Local Offer Bulletin was published in December 2023. This was sent to 932 recipients; this bulletin replaces the Buzz Network Newsletter and is attached to the Buzz Network mailing list. Also, sent to local School SENCOs. • SEND Family Fun Day organised and hosted by SPCF in April 2023. This event was hugely successful and increased access to Local Offer providers and services whilst giving families a fantastic inclusive, fun day. In total, 822 parent/carers, young people and families and over 25 providers attended the event. • This area is a priority in the SEND Strategy 2022-2027.
	Home to School Transport Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following meetings with partners, Southampton PCF, Re:Minds etc to receive

<p>Significant challenges with the service in September 2022/2023</p> <p>Lack of communication with families</p> <p>Delays/absence of drivers/vehicles</p> <p>In turn distress to families, children and YP</p> <p>Lack of empathy from Transport Co-ordination Team staff</p>	<p>feedback from families and the decision that an improvement plan would be put in place and a planned independent review would be carried out to ensure service level improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the Edge Review of free school travel earlier this year a lot of work has been undertaken by our school transport colleagues, here are some updates: • A three-year transformation programme has been put in place. The Governance for the Transformation Programme is through a Board which includes representation from the Parent Carer Forum. • More staff were allocated to the School Travel Service Team over Summer 2023, to help them answer questions more quickly and decide on transport arrangements more quickly. • A new updates webpage for parents and carers has been created. This will give parents key dates and deadlines, contact details and any updates relevant to the transport service. • More providers of routes are going to be delivering the service, this will help the service to be more reliable and efficient. • Providers will be asked to comply with additional quality measures going forward, improving the standard of the service that you receive. • At EHCP annual reviews, an additional sheet of information will be completed detailing the child's specific travel needs. This will be shared with the child's escort and driver to help them
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	<p>to make the journey as smooth and comfortable as possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent carer information booklet is being developed, in collaboration with the Parent Carer Forum, this will help to explain very clearly how the free school travel service works and will answer many of the frequently asked questions. • There is a new central number and email address. The number is 023 8083 2419 and email - travel.coordination@southampton.gov.uk • SPCF were commissioned to provide empathy and lived experience training to Transport Co-ordination staff.
<p>Lack of Post 16 provision and awareness of Post 16 Services and Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re:Minds hosted a Transition to Adulthood Fair on 24th March 2023. This was a huge success with a large number of providers and families in attendance. In total, 213 people attended the event, 132 Parent/Carers and Young People and 81 Professionals. 22 people received one to one support at the event and there were engaging and informative speakers/talks happening at the event including SENDIASS, Adult Mental Health, Preparation for Adulthood and SCC Adult Social Care.
<p>SPCF have reported a huge increase in Food bank and fuel enquiries/referrals coming into them. 60 referrals in one week in December.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the rising costs of living, families are struggling with the day to day costs/food. Families that receive free school meals continue to be provided with food vouchers during the school holidays.

	<p>Communication – a need for an update even if it's to say there is no update. Parent Carers currently feel it is up to them to be proactive and contact the service.</p> <p>Many parent/carers feel that when they request a change or a request for information, there is a lack of communication from the 0-25 Service during this process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEND Team has been aiming to improve the quality of communications with families. In part this has been around managing expectation and ensuring that telephone and email responses reflect times when the service is under particular pressure. • Going forward we are exploring the introduction of SEND Navigators to be a first point of contact for families, we are currently waiting on a funding decision regarding this.
	<p>Inclusive practice, historic concerns around inclusion, exclusions, reduced timetables</p> <p>Easily accessible information should be available about what each school should provide and the process they should follow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We're challenging schools where practice is identified as not being inclusive. • Ordinarily Available Provision Document (OAP) published in October 2023, this replaces the former Graduated Response Document and provides information and guidance about the process schools should follow when SEND is identified in any child or young person. • Inclusion and improvement of outcomes for pupils with SEND is a key education priority. The Delivering Better Value Programme is being delivered from 2023 to 2025. This includes – • Autism in Schools roll out to all schools in the city – Southampton were one of the pilot areas for these courses that were funded by NHS England. Within the pilot we were able to deliver this project to approximately 15 schools in the city. The improved outcomes for children

		<p>and young people were so positive, that we decided we'd use some of the DBV funds to deliver this training to every mainstream school in the city, by April 2025. This is to ensure that there is a strong offer of support for autism and neurodiversity in all of our schools, regardless of where you live.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Emotional Mental Health – Schools are repeatedly feeding back that they are finding this area of need increasingly challenging since the pandemic. A new post will be managed by our Southampton Inclusion Partnership and will offer advice and support to schools specifically for children presenting with complex Social, Emotional, Mental Health Needs. In addition, a 30 day SLA will be funded through the DBV programme to provide whole school support.• School Inclusion Audit Manager – We will shortly be launching a new audit tool that we will ask schools to complete to measure their inclusive practice inclusive of their strengths and areas for development. This role will be used to quality assure these audits and offer direct support to schools who may be feeling more challenged by certain aspects of inclusion. This is specifically in response to feedback from parents that suggests that there is an inconsistency of inclusive practice across schools in the city. It offers specialist support to school in a time when resources are incredibly stretched. This audit tool will sit alongside the
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		<p>co-produced “Southampton Ordinarily Available Provision” document, which has been developed to support schools to understand what should ordinarily be available for children with SEND in their schools and give them helpful advice on how to best support specific presenting needs. It will also be a helpful document for parents in terms of what type of support to expect from mainstream schools. The Southampton Parent Carer Forum have shared a PDF of the word version of this on their Facebook page, and it has been sent to all schools in the city.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This area is a priority in the SEND Strategy 2022-2027
	<p>Lack of Special School Places and mainstream provision for children and YP with SEND.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special School re-configuration provision an additional 278 places for 2026, plans currently in progress. • to consider opening additional SEN Units and Resource provisions in mainstream schools. • We have commissioned an independent review for SEND funding and resource within mainstream schools in support of the inclusive strategy and to enhance the offer in mainstream. Peter Gray has been appointed to carry this out, Southampton SENDIASS co-ordinated parent/carer feedback to this consultation as the forum was going through a transitional period.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New provision for Hearing Impaired children at Newlands Primary School • New Autism Resource Base at Redbridge Community School (The Beacon) • Approval for a new resourced provision at Woodlands School.
	CAMHS – Still long waiting lists for assessment and very little support in the interim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re:Minds commissioned to provide Cygnet and Earlybird plus Autism course to parent/carers to support families whilst on assessment waiting lists and to add to family toolkits to support their children. • In addition, extra interventions are being explored in response to the national shortage of ADHD Medication. <p>This area is a priority in the SEND Strategy 2022-2027</p>
	Lack of Mental Health Services and Support for Children and Young People in the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving children and young people’s mental health and emotional wellbeing requires a collaborative approach of all those working with children and young people and is firmly recognised in Southampton as a shared priority across all agencies working in the health, social care and education sectors, public sector and community and voluntary sector, embedded in

		<p>the city's partnership plans: Southampton City Strategy 2015 - 2025, Southampton City Five Year Health & Care Strategy 2020 – 2025 and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017 – 2025 and the Children and Young People's Strategy 2021-2026 that is being updated in 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is specifically addressed in the Emotional and Mental Health Wellbeing plan 2021-27. • This area is a priority in the SEND Strategy 2022-2027
<p>Local Offer Webpage electronic feedback</p>	<p>Southampton has a hugely diverse community and feedback was received that not all Parent/Carers, Young People and Young Adults have their own translation software automatically installed. Also, feedback around our community that do not have access to technology and IT equipment to access the Local Offer website, how do they access this information?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A joint survey with SPCF was published and there were a large percentage of families that advised that they do not have their own translation software automatically installed on their device/laptop/PC or via google translate etc. • Southampton Libraries to assist with families that potentially don't have access to IT resources. Also, Southampton Libraries are offering warm spaces for families that could go hand in hand with offering IT resources to use the internet/printers/search on Local Offer website. • Chat GPT (AI) – look into this for translation resource and as to how this could be used for looking at website.
	<p>Short Breaks/Max Card direct feedback from SPCF SPCF Max Card Report published July 2023</p> <p>SPCF published a report following research carried out in respect of the use of the Max Card in our community. There are considerable concerns about how effective the Max card is, lack of awareness from providers when</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max Card is currently under review, and we are awaiting on feedback from the Parent Carer Forum.

families try to use the card to access activities and take up by providers in the local community. Also, promotion of information about the MAX card and where you can use it and if you need the card to access specific local offer commissioned provider activities.	
Search functionality not as accurate as it could be when searching or specific subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website user experience testing to continue next year and to look into specific search issues to identify where the gaps are/what the issues are what needs to be done to rectify this.
Use of videos and animations to explain key services and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work continues around this, due to lack of resources in the design team but also when we get to this point to make sure that the videos/animations are meaningful, informative and useful and not just lip service.
Young People Engagement/area of the website – how can engage with YP to make this area more engaging, useful and informative for Young People?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work continuing with all Service areas and in particular areas that work closely with Young People to look at ways to how best engage with YP. Looking into use of social media platforms such as TikTok as we know this the most popular platform that Young People engage with.

Positive feedback –

Local Offer Website – “Overall, the local offer looks so much better, much more accessible and easier to understand and it works on mobile sites too which is great.

Local Offer website – “I use the local offer website regularly to signpost and navigate families to the right services, it’s so much easier to use than the previous version”.

Local Offer Website - “Keep up the good work”.

Local Offer Website – “This has really improved in the last 1-2 years”.

Local Offer Website – “The new website seems really good so far! Very easy to navigate and access!”

Local Offer Officer presence at coffee mornings – “Claire attends our half termly parent partnership coffee mornings run by myself. Claire’s input and support is invaluable for informing our parents about what the Local Authority has to offer. Claire is always friendly and approachable and has built up strong relationships with many of our parents. We always look forward to Claire sharing information and supporting our parents of children with SEND as she offers an olive branch within the local community.”

What the data tells us about activity

- On average there are 3015 sessions per month on the Local Offer Website with approximately 4880 views per month.
- The most visited pages on the Local Offer website are:
 - Global Developmental Delay
 - Buzz Network/Short Breaks Card
 - Education, Health and Care Plans
- The most Local Offer search words or phrases are:
 - EHCP
 - SEND
 - EYSS

- Top searches on the Local Offer website:
 - Day Services
 - Childcare
 - Sure start

Summary

We've received lots of feedback on our local offer of services in Southampton and are continually responding to this through our service planning and delivery. Feedback from users is at the centre of our SEND Strategy and action plan and is supporting us to prioritise areas for development and to identify and address gaps in commissioning.

Whilst the website has seen significant increases in "hits", we aren't receiving much feedback through the website directly and we need to look into why this might be the case. Parents have fed back that they find the site useful but too many are saying that they haven't heard of it and/or don't actively use it as a single point of information.

We continue to ask services and colleagues to support parents to access the site if they don't have the access of facilities to do this themselves.

To date all of our feedback is coming from parents and the website is currently aimed at parents/carers/professionals so this is an area that needs to be addressed in order to provide information for and seek feedback from children and young people.

Next Steps

Over the next year we aim to enhance the local offer site accessibility and content by:

- Primary Co-production of the Local Offer/website with Southampton Parent Carer Forum to ensure we are meeting need and statutory regulations.
- Continuing the Local Offer Website User Experience Testing sessions on a regular basis in order to receive feedback on how parent/carers and Young People use the website and any updates/amendments required to improve accessibility and content of the website.
- Host another SEND Family Day/Local Offer Live event (organised and facilitated by the parent carer forum) to offer information and work dependent on parent/children/young people's feedback. (SEND Family Fun Day with Local Offer Providers), the forum would rather this description as opposed to Local Offer Live.

- Increase presence of the SEND Local Officer at local coffee mornings to support families with navigating and signposting families to the support they need.
- The Local Offer Officer to visit and be present at various SCC departments such as social care, family hubs to promote awareness of the Local Offer website and upskill professionals on use of the Local Offer website and how to navigate the website.
- Explore through the whole council young people co-production work/focus groups and how to make information relevant to and accessible by young people with additional needs. We'd also like to know how and where they'd like this information hosted.
- Continue to work closely with service users to identify gaps in provision to inform future commissioning.
- Allowing more services access to their own editing rights to help ensure that information is kept up to date.